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ABSTRACT

The focus of the third report of the National Advisory Council is on effectively preparing the disadvantaged for full participation in society. The United States has developed into a technological society with no place for the uneducated, unskilled individual. Though the present educational system works well for the majority, 20 percent of the population is now excluded because of inadequate educational opportunity. The primary reason this nation has not yet established a society in which there is equal opportunity to learn and work is that it has not yet tried. To achieve individual potential, the nation should: (1) recognize that employment is an integral part of education by establishing an employment agency in every secondary school, including part-time employment in the curriculum, and providing further education for the dropout, (2) give priority to programs for the disadvantaged without separating them from the mainstream of education, (3) encourage parents and students to participate in the development of vocational programs, and (4) establish residential schools for those who need them most. (SB)

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THIRD REPORT

National Advisory Council on Vocational Education

Vocational Education Amendments of 1968 Public Law 90-576

July 10, 1970

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

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Honorable Elliot Richardson
Secretary
Department of Health, Education
and Welfare
330 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Mr. Secretary:

In this, our Third Report, we have devoted our attention to one of the most glaring failures of the American education system: its inability to effectively prepare the disadvantaged for full participation in society. The enclosed Report includes our recommendations for dealing with this problem, and offers suggestions on integrating school and work experience, providing needed guidance for dropouts and others who do not easily conform to the regular school system, and developing programs for the disadvantaged which do not separate them from the mainstream of American education.

We believe that our recommendations, if adopted, would provide Federal support for the goal that every American child be given an education relevant to his special needs. In addition, we feel that the enactment of these recommendations would go far in trying to eliminate some of the most long-standing inequities of an educational system which has been geared to the "average" student, to the neglect and detriment of significant minority groups.

Sincerely,

Hugh Calkins
Chairman

Hugh Calkins

Enclosure

The National Advisory Council on Vocational Education was created by the Congress through the Vocational Education Amendments of 1968. It is composed of 21 persons, appointed by the President from diverse backgrounds in labor, management and education. It is charged by law to advise the Commissioner of Education concerning the operation of vocational education programs, make recommendations concerning such programs, and make annual reports to the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare for transmittal to Congress.

THIRD REPORT

NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL
ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

In its First Report, the Council urged that the nation overcome its preoccupation with the idea that college is desirable for everyone, and that it develop a new respect for vocational-technical education as an effective form of career preparation. In its Second Report, the Council recommended that the federal government make fundamental policy changes in its approach to funding, in the organization and role of the Office of Education, and in present and proposed manpower policies and legislation.

In this, the Third Report, the Council deals with what it considers the basic challenge to American education today: Can it equip for effective participation in the life of the country, the 20 percent of the population now excluded because of inadequate educational opportunity?

The United States has developed into a technological society with no place for the uneducated, unskilled individual. The present educational system works well for the majority, i. e. for the children of the educated who with their talents increase the complexity of society and broaden the gap that separates them from the uneducated.

But a clock is ticking. The human time bomb that is the disadvantaged, the minority, the poor is approaching the moment of fracture. Deeply frustrated, untrained, impatient youth have concluded from their observations of the Sixties that the only way to create change is through violence. Their impatience is the mechanism of explosion.

The primary reason this nation has not yet established a society in which there is equal opportunity to learn and work is that it has not yet tried. Early in the Sixties, the people of the United States resolved to place a man on the moon within the decade. They were successful. The objective was accomplished because the resources and the attention required were devoted to the task.

In the mid-Sixties, the nation embarked upon an effort to eliminate ignorance and poverty in the United States. A few years later, it was seen that this objective could not be achieved easily or quickly, and the country drew back. A distant war and a new concern about environment are now consuming the attention once directed to these goals.

What America needs most is a commitment to fulfill its most basic ideal. This nation was founded on a belief in the inherent worth of every individual. The fulfillment of individual potential is the country's historic mandate.

To achieve that mandate in the Seventies, the Council recommends that the nation take four basic steps:

1. Recognize that employment is an integral part of education.

Much attention has been given to the effect of education on employment. Not enough has been paid to the opposite proposition: that employment, as an integral part of education, is essential to the learning experience of many youths.

a. Every secondary school should be an employment agency.

For many years, universities and colleges have operated employment offices through which graduating students and prospective employers conduct negotiations about jobs. In a handful of comprehensive schools, and in many vocational schools, a similar employment service is conducted for graduating seniors. This practice must become universal. It must become a priority national objective that schools in disadvantaged neighborhoods establish employment offices at once and accept a responsibility for removing barriers to the employment of their graduates.

Many educators will oppose this conclusion. They will say that finding a job is the responsibility of the employment service, not of the school. The Council believes this attitude ignores the importance of developing an understanding, on the

part of the student, of the relationship between his academic work and life in the real world. Schools which provide vocational education without also providing a job do not have a complete program. Such schools should not have full vocational funding.

Students learn best when they want to learn. A school successfully placing its students in jobs which open up careers is more likely to have motivated students than a school which does not. A school in which getting a job is part of the curriculum is more likely to have students who understand why reading and mathematics make a difference than a school which regards employment as somebody else's business.

b. <u>Part-time employment should be a part of the curriculum.</u>

There are a few essentials in the curriculum. Communication skills, mathematics, and some ability in problem solving are widely recognized to be among them. Not so widely recognized are the habits and attitudes which add up to employability.

Many children learn these attitudes at home. A father who is regularly employed and displays a responsible attitude toward his job is likely to teach employability to his children without much help from the school. A child who is brought up in a family in which there is no employed adult, or in which observed employment is sporadic and casual, is not likely to learn at home

how to hold a job. For such a child, employability is as important a part of the school curriculum as reading.

A good way to teach employability where it is not an integral part of every day life, is through employment. Every school with students who are not learning desirable employment habits at home should, to the extent the labor market allows, make part-time employment a regular part of the curriculum. Where the labor market does not provide enough part-time jobs, the work-study program under the Vocational Education Act should be adequately funded and utilized as a substitute for work experience in private employment.

It will cost money to locate part-time work stations and to supervise, counsel and instruct the students who hold them. Few expenditures, however, will bring a bigger return in linking education with productivity, and in making schools effective in preparing young people for meaningful careers.

c. <u>The further education of the dropout</u>.

This Council recommends a basic change in the national attitude toward dropouts. Currently, they are considered failures. The President of the United States annually appoints a committee to keep them in school. Critics and citizens measure the performance of school systems by their ability to reduce the number

who drop out. Those who do drop out are considered disgraced, and are lost by the school systems, and rarely welcomed back.

Where our educational system fails these young people is not so much in its inability to halt their early departure from school, as in its failure to recapture them later. A school system should in fact, as well as in theory, keep jurisdiction over the young people within its borders until they are either graduated or have reached such an age that they may be properly regarded as adults.

Schools should invest as much in follow-up and counseling for those who drop out as for those who remain in school. School systems need to establish programs for the young people who have had their first employment experience and are ready for further education. The adult high schools and the cooperative programs which are being established in many cities are healthy developments which must be encouraged.

2. <u>Give priority to programs for the disadvantaged without separating the disadvantaged from the mainstream of education.</u>

In our Second Report the Council said:

> "Federal legislation now encourages the development of separate programs for the disadvantaged. Such programs say to the disadvantaged that they are second-class citizens who cannot make it in the mainstream. Such programs appear to shut the door to career advancement. What the disadvantaged want and need is access to vocational and technical programs for

> career preparation in the mainstream. Counseling, tutoring and other support and assistance are essential, but separateness destroys dignity."

Present legislation and policies encourage separateness by the form of the subsidy. It is time that accountants stop making policy for vocational education. A system must be devised in which the necessary subsidies to vocational education programs do not require that the programs be carried out in a way which defeats many of their most basic purposes.

3. Encourage parents and students to participate in the development of vocational programs.

In its First Report, this Council called attention to the prevalent attitude that vocational education is something which is good, but only for someone else's children. Among minority groups there is a well-founded suspicion that counselors, especially majority-group counselors, are influenced by a conviction that minority youth are fit only for the more menial occupations. Because minorities are underrepresented in many occupations, they are also underrepresented on vocational facilities, whose majority-group image is forbidding to them.

In time, this attitude may be overcome, this suspicion proven unjustified, and this image replaced. In this decade, however, these are factors which no one planning vocational education can ignore. There are some vocational facilities which are underutilized because they were planned for, but not with, their clientele. Vocational

education will not succeed in attracting the clientele which can profit most from it, unless it involves that clientele in its planning and direction.

For many years vocational educators have used industrial advisory committees to assist in developing curriculum, locating cooperative job stations, and employing graduates. Now vocational educators must also create advisory committees of parents and students. Only by doing so will vocational programs be successful in appealing to many students who are not planning to go on to post-twelfth grade education, and whose career training must, therefore, be acquired in school.

4. Establish residential schools for those who need them most.

There is mounting evidence that America must make an investment in residential schools for some adolescents who cannot cope with their homes or their neighborhoods. A nation whose boarding schools are conducted only for the wealthy and for those under juvenile court sentence has misplaced its priorities. There are young people who will respond to remedial education and career preparation only if separated from home and neighborhood conditions which make it impossible for them to learn in a day-school setting. Every major metropolitan community and every poor rural area needs a residential school for such youngsters.

Congress has never made a clear decision on whether a national investment in residential schools for disadvantaged youth should

be made and, if so, under what auspices it should be conducted. The Job Corps was a courageous experiment in the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. Some Job Corps centers, located near urban areas and serving young people sixteen and seventeen years old, have been notably successful. The Advisory Council recommends that the residential school provisions of the 1968 Vocational Amendments be funded. School authorities must be given, on an experimental basis, an opportunity to demonstrate that residential schools with career preparation geared to disadvantaged youth can prove to be a worthwhile investment.

By enacting the 1968 Vocational Amendments, Congress declared its intent that a better society, based upon educational opportunity, should be built. Intent, however, even when it is the law of the land, does not alone bring action. The disadvantaged of this country have made it clear that they are tired of intentions which are not backed by adequate funds or by a genuine national concern. Eighteen months have gone by since the passage of the Vocational Amendments, and progress has been slow. Strong Executive leadership designed to translate intent into concrete, workable programs is due. The disadvantaged will no longer accept promises.

Respectfully submitted,

Hugh Calkins

Hugh Calkins, Chairman

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